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ABSTRACT

This document is a prospectus for a pilot project being developed by Teacher Corps Rural-Migrant, University of Southern California, in cooperation with the Cutler-Orosi Unified School District in Tulare County, California. The project aims to "utilize visual literacy to teach English as a second language and to develop other communication skills in educationally handicapped Spanish-speaking Mexican American children of migrant and seasonal farm workers, using the camera as the 'eye of the mind' to bring out self-perception, environmental awareness, and the ability to interact in and relate to, read and write about (in both English and Spanish) the 'world we live in.'" One of the specific objectives is to "show that learner-centered curriculum created by the child with a camera, which allows that child to 'invent' himself and conceptualize about the world he lives in, is a more effective teaching tool than teacher-generated, cognitively devised material which must be taught in a rigidly structured and controlled sequence." A discussion of the author's rationale, the type of activities to be incorporated into this "Visual Literacy" program, evaluation and dissemination, and the hardware to be used, are presented. (See AL 002 444 for a description of the pilot program carried out at the Yettem, California school.) (AMM)

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THE CAMERA AS THE "EYE OF THE MIND"

by
Patrica Heffernan-Cabrera

A Pilot Project for Visual Literacy and the Teaching of English as a Second Language to Disadvantaged Spanish Speaking Migrant Children

AL 002 424

Rationale

This is a prospectus for a pilot project that utilizes visual literacy to teach English as a Second Language (TESOL) and to develop other communication skills in educationally handicapped Spanish-speaking Mexican American children of migrant and seasonal farm workers, using the camera as the "eye of the mind" to bring about self-perception, environmental awareness, and the ability to interact in and relate to, read and write about (in both English and Spanish) the "world we live in".

This project is being developed by Teacher Corps Rural-Migrant, University of Southern California, School of Education, Department of Teacher Education, in cooperation with the Cutler-Orosi Unified School District in Tulare County, California. Thirty Spanish-surname children of migrants, Grades K-3, in the Yettem School will participate in the pilot program. It will incorporate English-Second-Language learning techniques and the use of camera hardware into a unified concept whereby the camera becomes a new kind of pencil that allows the non-English-speaking child to discover the joy of developing and manipulating language and to "write" his own textbooks. An ethnically/economically/geographically similar control group will validate the research design.

The basic concept of this proposal is that language development in young children (in both first and second languages) is closely tied to affective behavior, to concrete and subjectively relevant experiences, and to purposeful communication. It will test the hypothesis that even the child who suffers from socio-economic-educational disadvantagement has a bank of environmental experiences which are neither adequately exposed or fully developed by traditional teaching techniques and that the camera can become the incentive tool which allows that child to

conceptualize his ideas and thus to share the excitement of discovery, interaction, and exploration of self and the external world which are part of the learning proces

Public education has long been fascinated with the intent of the message of perhaps its greatest educational philosopher, John Dewey. Early in this century, Dewey's advocacy of "learning by doing" led to all manner of experimentatio in his name. Too often, however, the point Dewey was making was missed. To Dewey, "mind is the...on-going significant organization of self and world...". Nowhere, according to him could a child involved in the adventure of growing and learning unify the beauty of self, world, and mind better than in the community.

Why not, then, encourage the child to go to that portion of his experience that he knows best:his community, his world---to involve him in language-building experiences? Why not place in his hand a device capable of recording his adventures as he moves through that world so that he can give visual credence to what he has actually learned? And why not then use what he has recorded as the basis for his own personal set of learning materials?

For the child who is learning English as a Second Language, visual literacy can have especially exciting implications: the camera becomes the "third eye" which allows that child to become an active participant in the discovery process. By visually verbalizing about his world, he begins to organize and order those things in his immediate environment which are familiar, which have form and structure. A facial expression, a piece of furniture, a tree, can convey an idea or be representational. Thereby these become elements of language. Without being constantly aware of it, the child with a camera is learning, at his own rate and painlessly, about the phonology, the morphology and the syntax of language... and this learning is applicable to his native language as well as to his second language. He is learning...since even the photographic statement

can have subject elements, predicate elements and object elements, to order the symbolic lexicon of oral and written communication.

It is a false assumption that children fail in school because they are "educationally handicapped" when they enter the school situation. Child development specialists flatly state that 2/3 of our intellectual growth occurs before the age of six; therefore, we as educators must accept the responsibility for failing to integrate the child's environmental expertise into the learning situation. We "turn off" the child-particularly the low-income (and non-English-Speaking) child-by a rigid adherence to traditional curricula and stereotyped techniques, yet we are quick to shift the responsibility to the child's background:

By allowing children to use cameras, we propose to develop self-actualizing English-second-language curriculum which is particularly relevant for those children lacking in school "know-how" or otherwise unwilling or psychologically unprepared to become involved in the usual teacher-student relationships. The transition from visual literacy to other forms of communication will become a self-generated step,instead of a threatening and often rejected process.

Description of Target Group

Tulare County's role as a center of California's migrant subculture is well documented. Its large population of families involved in seasonal farm work constitutes a distinctly deprived group, educationally, economically, and socially. They exist on the periphery of local town life yet are totally isolated from it. Their lack of a sense of community, their language and cultural alienation, and the failure of their children to become meaningfully involved in the school situation are tragic!

The child who is linguistically disadvantaged...who feels he is different because his language is not the acceptable standard, often feels he must be different in other ways, too. If he is made to feel that his language is not desirable...that there is something wrong with the way he talks...it is a short step to the conclusion that there is something wrong with him. By first allowing him to create visually, with a camera, before he moves on to the symbolic lexicon of a first or second language, we can show such a child that he exists in a real world, that he can safely share his emotions and thought processes, and that he has something to say which others care about!

We believe literacy is more than the teaching of the 3 R's: it suggests that each individual has much to learn about himself and what he is capable of doing, and that in that process an interaction and a sharing of experiences... communication occurs. For a child with a camera, the world is suddenly commented upon, extracted from, and made forever a part of his identity.

Visual literacy allows him to build a positive self-image even as he struggles to make that image fit into the new cultural patterns of his school community and the middle-class world.

Objectives

In Teacher Corps Rural-Migrant, we have worked, albeit on a minimum level, with film and camera, in attempting to establish a visual base for the development of relevant curriculum for Spanish-speaking migrant children (who have been virtually untouched by other educational programs). We believe a more comprehensive approach can provide significant conclusions about teaching and learning, not only for the non-English speaking child, but for any school population in any socio-economic setting. This project has the following objectives:

(1) To show that so-called "disadvantaged" Spanish-speaking Mexican-American children have the same learning potential as the rest of the population;

to demonstrate that the child who speaks no English (or a substandard dialect) need not be linguistically handicapped if he is allowed to create visually before he is confronted with the complicated symbolic lexicon of a second language;

(2) To destroy the myth that learning must be externally imposed and to demonstrate that the use of camera hardware can actualize and capitalize on the inherent intellectual curiosity and learning potential of children;

(3) To focus on the need for our media-oriented society to utilize technology in the classroom, in order to allow children to articulate their experiences in an orderly fashion, for intentional communication...visually as well as verbally;

(4) To show that learner-centered curriculum created by the child with hardware (a camera) which allows that child to "invent" himself and conceptualize about the world he lives in, is a more effective teaching tool than teacher-generated, cognitively devised material, which must be taught to in a rigidly structured and controlled sequence; and to show that such curricula can be articulated in social studies, science, math and other subject areas as well as in language arts;

(5) To maximize the affective and cognitive development of children, and to build in children a hierarchy of perceptive and sensory skills, including recognition of differences in brightness, size, shape, color and depth perception, as entre to the more sophisticated process-oriented communication and problem-solving skills;

(6) To help develop a sense of responsibility and positive concepts of self in children who may have never before experienced pride of ownership, by encouraging them to use their very own simple camera equipment, not only at school, but in their neighborhood community;

(7) To show that "writing" with the camera as a pencil is a logical first step to the development of literacy, because, in actuality every child composes

in his mind before he is ready to read;

(8) To capitalize on the environmental experiences which children, no matter what their socio-economic status, bring to the classroom, in order to enrich the learning situation for the total school population; to show that schools which fail to integrate these experiences into their curricula are the real underachievers;

(9) To encourage the child to build on his own language and experience bank using camera hardware to learn at his own rate, "ready himself" for reading and other communication skills, produce his own learning materials, and succeed in academic tasks;

(10) To demonstrate that language development in both 1st and 2nd languages is closely tied to affective behavior, to concrete and subjectively relevant experiences, and to purposeful communication;

(11) To develop a model capable of replication for any school situation in any socio-economic setting;

(12)To develop a comprehensive public information program, including "live" presentations at national conferences, and papers in professional and other publications, in order to share experiences and findings with the widest possible audience of teachers, administrators, community leaders and others seeking creative approaches to human interaction and the learning process.

The linguistically disadvantaged child has special problems which early training in visual literacy can help him overcome:

--most available materials for early childhood education contain language beyond his experience. This child becomes easily frustrated when he cannot respond with acceptable verbal labels for familiar objects depicted in these materials.

--linguistically disadvantaged children come to school with a language of their own and an experience bank which does not prepare them to carry out typical middle class learning tasks.

...children who speak no English or a substandard dialect of English frequently encounter teachers who do not understand them, and retreat to silence.

...the linguistically disadvantaged child who must respond to predetermined pictorial or verbal symbols in a traditional reading text (i.e. the living room of a middle class home which looks nothing like his own) is often labelled "retarded" because he fails to make "correct" responses to such symbols.

Visual literacy purports to introduce an intermediate step to bridge the gap between oracy and literacy. Traditionally, a child is taught to read, then to compose by writing. In actuality, however, he is composing long before he ever reads.

By the time a child reaches school at age five he knows intuitively all the grammar of his language he will ever know and can manipulate his language well enough to express the thoughts and needs of his milieu. He is, in fact, composing all the time as he talks with members of his family, relates incidents to them, plays with language and games, etc.

Once a child has composed visually, he can begin to compose verbally. What he captures with his camera becomes a whole story for him, complete with all the nuances of good story-telling. It is then a short step from oral composition to reading. If the story he composes from his pictures is tape recorded and

typewritten for him, he will begin to associate sounds with symbols, especially as he plays back his recording and hears his voice pronouncing words as he visualizes them on paper. Thus, he begins to teach himself to read and prepares himself for more formal instruction in reading to come within the next few years.

The following types of activities will be incorporated into this program design:

Visual Perception Training

I. Visual Vistas (single framing):

a. The Camera Composes The child will be asked to use his still camera as a "third eye" to visually record a particular portion of a whole thing he see When his picture is printed he will be encouraged to verbalize about what he has recorded. He will thus be, in fact, extending visual composition into verbal composition.

b. The teacher tape records and writes the child's spoken words. The teacher will record this verbal composition by printing below the child's picture (the child's) statement. In collecting his own visual literacy materials, each child thus builds his own reading curriculum. He gradually begins to inductively connect the sounds of language with the symbolic lexicon of printed language. The teacher will also be able to help a child to become literate in a second language using these materials The teacher will use a variety of single-frame experiences for different reasons:

1. to ask a child to focus on a section of the whole ("Take a picture of school." What emerges, of course, is many different aspects of school, the whole).
2. to ask a child to focus on one thing among many things ("there are some flowers. Take a picture of a flower"). This allow the child to practice

visual discrimination .

3. to ask a child to build a language experience out of a single frame ("Take a picture that tells a story". There the teacher uses the tape recorder or the typewriter to record or write the children's stories).

II. Multiple-Frame Experiences. The child is asked to use his "third eye" to tell a story. As his story unfolds, he creates the narrative and necessary dialogue and records this on the tape recorder. A teacher aide, using the primary typewriter, transcripts visually the child's recorded story. In putting the two together, the child constructs his own reading materials:

The Teacher uses a variety of situations in which he asks children to tell stories. The children will begin with using their cameras in the school, and will gradually move into their homes and the community, constantly recording their own world and building from their own experience banks. By bringing to school pictures of his own environment each child is sharing his private world in a positive context designed to gain him approval and thus is continuing to build a positive self-image.

III. Slide Presentations: A logical outgrowth of the still photo is the slide. Because of its capacity to be visually more stimulating, children can use slides effectively.

With slides, children extend the concept of sequence of plot in a story. Because slides are projectable, they can be utilized for total group involvement (a child can tell his story into a tape recorder and play it back for the class as he simultaneously manipulates the slide projector), telling his story in sequence.

At this stage, also, children begin to work in groups to build a story by combining slides and experiences. The result is a group composition for presentation to the class, with each child in the group contributing his ideas to the story. Children thus learn to make decisions using the democratic process, and also begin to build concepts of taste and discrimination in deciding which ideas can best he used.

IV. Motion Pictures: Children move rather easily from telling a story by using slides to telling a story with motion pictures. Where the "slide show" must be accompanied by a narrative that tells what is happening and thus provides the movement, the motion picture records the movement and the language component becomes visual as well as narrative.

The teacher has the children group themselves, and then asks each group to compose a story that contains action. Because children will be using a motion picture camera, they will be encouraged to plan the "motion" in their story very carefully. Techniques of Improvisational Theater will be integrated here. Dialogue between characters, for instance, must be handled visually, and may call for wide, sweeping gestures and melodramatic postures. In this respect, the teacher will rely heavily on the use of educational drama as she encourages children to practice "silent language" through acting. Children who might otherwise be stymied because they lack the language facilities to verbalize in an acceptable fashion can thus communicate effectively through mime.

In using the motion picture camera, children also learn the mechanics of group participation. Someone must be responsible for filming the story, someone for acting it out, someone for directing, someone for projecting

the finished product, etc. They thus learn to work together to produce a story.

An important element being learned here is the basis for much of the language arts work the child will later face in his schooling. He is inductively involving himself in the process of composing, first visually, then verbally, all the while composing for an audience that he knows will react to what he has to say. He is learning the various components of literature by composing literature visually (he knows that plot means a story has a beginning,goes somewhere, and has an ending; he knows that characters act and react within the plot; he even responds to nuances of message - what he wants to say - of mood - how the story makes him feel-, and atmosphere - what kind of "feeling" he is hoping to project to his audience).

V. Visual-Verbal Textbooks: Created by the child, and subject to daily changes, will record each child's visual experiences at home, at school, and in the community. Before writing skills are developed, the children write their stories visually with the camera, orally and aurally on the tape recorder for the teacher to print or put on the typewriter. The joy of owning a camera and the responsibility of caring for it (for children who might never before have possessed anything that was exclusively theirs) has obvious effects in terms of developing a sense of responsibility and a feeling of importance. Home visits and flyers will be used to explain the program to parents, and the responsibility of the children in owning their cameras.

VI. Field Trips: Field trips to allow the child to explore, visually record, read and talk about the world beyond his immediate neighborhood and classroom

community will help to broaden the scope of the program, the child's experiential range, and the extensiveness of the world he comments about, visually and with spoken and written language.

VII. The Challenge of Choosing a Subject: As the program progresses, children will face more sophisticated tasks, e.g., to photograph "things that pop", balloons, bubble gum, popcorn, for example. The story-telling and language articulation possibilities in such task-oriented projects are obvious, and the kind of interaction they will create between the child and his peers will have carryover effects that prepare him to respond to a variety of situations beyond the school and home.

In addition children will learn about the leadership role, about problem solving skills, about how to function as part of a team, about how to delegate authority, about participative management.

Too often, important research designs and innovative projects fail to have the impact merited by their findings because there is no carry-through of effort or sharing of findings. At a time when technification can make profound changes in teaching strategies and the actualization of learning potential, it becomes incumbent upon the innovator to provide for evaluation of his project and to share his conclusions (even when they do no provide pat anwers).

This English-Second-Language Visual Literacy program will include a model capable of replication and will provide for on-going and follow-through evaluation, as well as for the widest possible dissemination of information, both in the profession, and to the larger community.

Evaluation

We shall utilize a triple-track method to assess the English-Second-Language proficiency and the general intellectual and personal growth which occur as a result of visual literacy.

(1) One track will use the following major instruments in pre and post-test project evaluation: The California Standard Achievement Test of Vocabulary, Reading and Comprehension skills; the Lowenfeld Test of Visual and Haptical Attitudes; and the Dailey Language Facility Test (post-test). These results will be compared with those administered to a control group which has not been exposed to visual literacy. The California Achievement Test is a state standardized instrument which is administered in kindergarten and third grade. Although it has major limitations because it gives little indication of growth in experiences, non-verbal intelligence, creativity, and self-concept, we believe that children who have had visual literacy incentives will show significant improvement in scores on this state-required instrument.

(2) The second evaluation track will assess both the control group and

the test group as they react to learner-created materials. Visuals prepared by the test group will be presented to both groups of children. They will be asked to "tell the story" of what they see. The stories will be taped for comparative assessment, in terms of language facility and creativity, the ability to and interact.

We shall pre-test and post-test the project participants with the Kodak Visual Categories Discovery Set, and record pupil responses as an assessment of cognitive and affective development, in an attempt to determine if there is a change in the hierarchy of visual skills...recognition of differences in brightness, shape, size, hues, and height-depth, as well as more communication-oriented skills.

During the first few weeks of the program, we shall utiliza the Kodak Photo-Story Discovery Sets to determine how children order a sequence of pictures to "tell" or "write" a story, and how their articulation develops during the program.

Visual-verbal note books "written" by the students will be studied and annotated by teachers and project evaluation teams.

(3) The third track will be a visual montage, on 16mm film of the photographic activities of the child and his interaction with the group. This film will record the developing process of visual literacy, allow the teacher to evaluate her own progress in the classroom, the individual development of the children, and group responses.

Ultimately, it will become a training film and a valuable resource for dissemination of information, to be used by the Eastman Kodak Co. This film montage will be the final report on the project.

On-going evaluation of the project will be subjective as well as objective: For the teacher, the development of a "story line", progressing from the single-frame to more sophisticated sequences, will be a measure of developing thought processes.

Children will be provided with the opportunity to evaluate the work of other children, as well as their own work, in a non-threatening situation. By allowing them to thus assess themselves and to be assessed the children will learn positive aspects of group interaction, yet maintain their confidence in their right to individualized responses, both in terms of problem-solving and creative thinking.

Dissemination

We strongly believe it is a part of our responsibility to design a model capable of replication and to plan the widest possible dissemination of our findings.

A training film which will be part of the evaluative process will be an important instrument for promoting the multiple advantages of visual literacy, for a variety of school populations. But we believe that public information must be immediate and on-going, as well as follow-up. For this reason, we plan to make a presentation on our Eastman Kodak Visual Literacy TESOL Project to the National Conference for Teachers of TESOL, which is to be held in San Francisco in March 1970. Teacher Corps: Rural-Migrant has already been invited to make a presentation at this meeting, and we have apprised the conference directors of our plans to do a "live" demonstration on"Visual Literacy and TESOL". We plan to take a sampling of our test group to San Francisco, record on film their airplane flight, their experiences in the motel, and their responses to the city. Such a trip will be a first experience for these children. We shall capture the children on film, as well as their own filmmaking. There is dramatic, as well as informational impact in such a presentation in the promotion of the manufacturer's products, as well as in the promotion of highly significant and innovative educational concepts. The children themselves will conduct the presentation

beginning with slides, moving on to a series of stills and climaxing with a movie created by them about their trip to San Francisco.

Conferences and journals for which we plan presentations include:

National Conference for TESOL, March 1970, San Francisco.

International Reading Association Conference, May 1970, Anaheim.

Association of Childhood Education International Conference

Reading Teacher

Journal of Experimental Education

Experimental Innovation

American Education Magazine

Child Welfare Magazine

National Association of Educators of Young Children

California English Journal

AV Communications Review

Audio-Visual Communications

Audio-Visual Instruction

Educators' Guide to Media and Methods

California Journal of Elementary Education

CTA Journal

ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools

ERIC Clearinghouse on Early Childhood Education

Scholastic Teacher

FOCUS: The National Migrant Education Newsletter.

This project can be effectively developed through cooperative funding. Teacher Corps Rural-Migrant will provide the administrative leadership, teaching staff, film and processing costs and other instructional supplies, not including camera hardware.

EQUIPMENT LIST:

The following is a list of cameras and other hardware which we hope the Eastman Kodak Company will supply in order to make this project possible:

	Quantity
Instamatic Camera Model #44	30
Carousel 850 Projector w/Sound Synchonizer & Carrying Case	3
Carousel Slide Trays	30
Instamatic 8mm Movie Camera M 9 (C.W. Zoom lens)	12
8mm Instamatic Movie Projector M 95	3
8mm Take up reel	3
16mm Movie Camera w/Zoom lens	2
16mm Pageant Sound Projector Magnetic - Optical Model # 8K5	2
16mm Take up reel	2
8mm/16mm Splicer w/ Viewer	8
Kodak Visual Categories Discovery Set	5
Photo Story Discovery Sets	5
Casette Tape Recorders	10
Primary Typewriters	2
8mm Tripods W. Strobe Lights	5
16mm Tripods " " "	1
Projection Screens	1
Polaroid Cameras	5
Dry Mount equipment	1 outfit

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